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THE RELATION OF NURSING TO GENERAL EDUCATION *

By JAMES E. RUSSELL, LL.D.

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It is a great pleasure to welcome to this institution the representatives of a sister profession.

Teachers' College has been trying for the best part of a generation to develop a mode of training suited to the needs of teachers. We have discovered that the point of emphasis in the teacher's profession is shifting. Not many years ago it was looked upon as the chief part of its service, to give that kind of preparation that would qualify a few to become leaders of the many. Under an organization of society where the many were expected to follow, to be obedient and submissive, it was of the greatest possible importance that those who were set apart, for social reasons, or by reason of wealth, to positions of prominence and leadership should be fitted for that work.

In a sense, therefore, the work of the teacher of generations past has been remedial, in making good the deficiencies of those who in their time were destined for positions of prominence. With the shift that has come in our social life, particularly during the past hundred years, we have come to realize that education is not merely remedial, but that it must be preventive as well. It is all well and good to say that if you have competent leaders, social stability will result, but it follows, as a consequence, that the masses must be trained in submissiveness and trained in obedience. A state church, like the great Church of England, may play an important rôle in such a work as this. A military system, such as Germany and Russia have, may be most important, and it is possible too in a state of social caste to fix things so that those who are born in the lower strata of society will find it practically impossible to get out, and for that reason will be forced to keep on in the ruts where they find themselves.

Even in the Old World, conditions have changed in the past fifty years. The English Church no longer plays the rôle that it did a generation ago, and the great disturbance that we read of in English political

* Address of welcome delivered at the special session of the Superintendents' Society and the Associated Alumnæ, held at Teachers' College, New York, May 18, 1910.

life to-day is due primarily to the demand from the masses for that kind of training which will fit them to earn a decent livelihood and to play their part in the general social life. In our American democracy it is of course of supreme importance that the masses of the people shall be trained not merely in lines of technical skill, but also in the disposition to follow capable leaders and shall be given those ideals of life which make for citizenship. That is the task of the American teacher to-day, not merely to offer a knowledge of the three R's, of the classical languages, of mathematics, and certain suitable courses of study, not merely to give that kind of discipline which will enable people to think through clearly a problem to its end, but it is incumbent upon us, largely because we have no great overpowering national church, no conditions of caste in our social organization, such that it is impossible or impracticable for those born in lowly stations to rise, to train our people to be intelligent, to be skilful, to be obedient and submissive to reasonable laws and regulations, because they know that this is the better way.

In a sense, therefore, our education in these last fifty years has shifted from a process of giving instruction in a few subjects important to the select few, over to the bigger view that takes into account the whole round of life of the oncoming generation. Once you take this larger view, it is obvious that the teacher has need of a much higher degree of general intelligence than ever before. We need, to be sure, instructors in many lines, competent to give that kind of instruction which the few need, but we need to develop, as we have never needed at any time in history, those capable of taking a wide social view, those capable of organizing educational forces of all kinds in such a way as to prevent social disorder, to overcome social unrest, to make unnecessary repressive military measures and, in a measure, to take the place of the great controlling agencies of state and church such as we have known in generations past.

This, I take it, is preventive educational work. Looked at from this standpoint, the child is not merely an individual to be instructed a certain number of hours a day in the classroom, but the child is a physical organism that must be looked after with the most careful scrutiny. The conditions of life in the home must be studied, and the relations of home and school well understood. I have no excuse to offer, therefore, for urging the upbuilding in this institution of a great technical school for women, to give instruction in the household arts, in the hygiene of clothing, in nutrition, in sanitation, in all that goes to make the home scientifically correct and artistically pleasing.

A part of our work for some years past has been the training of

nurses for superintendents of hospitals and heads of training schools for nurses. You have a right, you representatives of this nursing profession, to exult in what has been accomplished by you in a professional way in these past few years, and I take it that at no previous meeting have you had so good cause for self-congratulation as you have at this. Yet, my friends, through it all there must run a note of sadness, the minor chord struck by that terrible accident in Cleveland a few weeks ago. One of the most intelligent nurses, most devoted mothers, most noble women dropped out of your work. I would, if I could, say a word in appreciation of the services of Mrs. Robb to the cause represented by her work in Teachers' College, but words fail me. Only a few weeks ago, the last time I ever saw her, she came to my office and told me that she had heard that I had expressed an opinion that perhaps our part of the work for nurses was done, that on account of the way being open for a specialized training, possibly other agencies would be willing to take up the burden of training nurses for the headship of these nurse training schools. She begged that I give up that thought, saying that she had devoted the best part of her later life to promoting this one idea; and, pointing her finger at me, she said, "I tell you that no matter what you may do or what your friends may do for nurses, there is no greater work to-day in this country than that which aims at the generous, all-round training of those women who are to head the nurse training schools."

I had to confess to her that I had dropped the remark of which she accused me, and it had been done mainly because I did not see the way clear to provide the money necessary for carrying on that enterprise. To be sure, we have recently received a most generous gift from a friend seated on this platform, for advancing the interests of nurses along certain newer lines. It does provide for a certain amount of instruction and for the maintenance of the directorship of such a department, but it does not provide, and I see no way of providing, for that particular chair which Mrs. Robb had closest to her heart. If, as has been intimated to me to-day, the appreciation of her services as a nurse and our loving thought of her as a woman should lead to the connection of her name with some phase of this new work in which we are engaged, I can assure you that it will meet with a very cordial reception on the part of this institution. We never went to her at any time during these past ten years for assistance, for counsel, for anything that she could give, that we did not get it and get it in unstinted fashion. Surely, it would be a fitting testimonial to carry on for generations to come, under her name, the work which I believe did lie closest to her heart.

It has been said, you know, that teaching is the noblest of professions, but the sorriest of trades. I think that might be turned to nursing as well. There is no trade sorrier, I am sure, than nursing, and there can be no profession nobler than nursing. So long as the nursing work and the profession that it represents can be looked upon as confined exclusively to the remedial phase, naturally the nurse must be the handmaid of the physician, and naturally, too, it will follow that her professional status must be strictly subordinate to that of her superior. Indeed that is a noble ambition, and yet medicine itself is advancing by leaps and bounds. The emphasis is coming over rapidly from the remedial aspects of medicine to the preventive aspect, and as the medical profession is raising itself in public esteem and is taking itself out of the category of the trades and putting itself high on the roll of the professions, so it must follow that nursing, in proportion as it becomes preventive, far-seeing, intelligent, it too will range itself on this professional scroll of merit. The physician who will say that he wants as little as possible of intelligence in his helpers will some day be forced to make public profession of his own ignorance. The world is all against that kind of professional service. There are, to be sure, some noble men, some keen and capable men in every profession, who do not take the long view, but there can be, bear this in mind, there can be no intelligent work looking to the long future, looking to the upbuilding of humanity, looking to the bettering of social conditions and the righting of social wrongs that is not guided by an intelligence vastly superior to that which is confined to the finger tips, however skilled they may be.

My friends, don't hesitate for one moment in your striving to put those who are capable of leadership in your profession on the highest intellectual plane. There will always be enough, no matter what the efforts you put forth, no matter how earnestly you may strive for these better things, there will always be enough on the lower plane. Theirs the task to do a great service under direction. Others are needed to organize and direct the new movement. We need you in education, just as we need the new type of lawyer, and just as we need the new type of physician, so we need the new type of nurse, and we need it all, and them all, for educational purposes, for the upbuilding of man, for the upbuilding of a better social order, and for the improvement in human life in that future towards which we are striving. There is no danger so great for any group of men or women as contentment with things easy to get. The best things are the hardest to get, and if some of these best things looming up now in enormous proportions through your professional service seem almost unattainable, that of itself is the

finest argument that can be adduced for working straight forward till you get it.

I bid you welcome, therefore, to an institution dedicated to education in its broadest aspects, to the training of the teacher in the kindergarten, the elementary school, the high school and the college, to the training of the teacher in the tenement district, of the teacher who is called Visiting Nurse in the public school system, and of the teacher who is to train other teachers to a nobler service as nurse.

A ROUGH NIGHT'S WORK

A STORY OF THE DEEP SEA MISSION ON THE LABRADOR

By MAY SIMPSON

THE summer had ended, and a busy one it had been with scarcely an empty bed in the hospital. Men and women of all kinds, with every conceivable ailment, and of varying nationality, had for a time occupied places in the wards until, as they became convalescent, their beds were filled by other and more urgent cases.

The hospital had to be closed for the winter, no one remaining in the isolated settlement after the summer fishery was done. On every hand there were signs of a great exodus, but to none came the difficulty experienced by the hospital staff—of moving in a few hours' notice with several sick folk in charge. Toward the end of the summer their numbers were always lessened as far as possible. Some were sent home with directions as to treatment, and others were taken away by friends as they sailed in their little crafts toward the south. But there were always some cases too serious to be discharged, and these were removed on the mail boat to the hospital two hundred miles down the coast, which remained open all winter.

It was a stormy evening near the middle of October when Mary Ann Johnson was admitted to the ward. The little mission steamer had carried her from a wretched home where the doctor had found her in a pitiable plight. The only womenfolk who had been around during the summer had gone back with their crews, while she had been left to face the journey as best she could when the time came. Her husband had been compelled to leave some weeks earlier, and the skipper to whose "crowd" she belonged knew how ill she was but he had "shipped her for the voyage" and all he thought of, probably, was the extra work it would entail if one of his hands dropped out—especially if it happened